The Commonweal

January 28, 1949

Italy: Coasting Along?

Leo J. Wollemborg

A Voice from St. Louis

Edward F. Meagher

BACK TO BOSTON

THE CP ITSELF ON TRIAL

THE UNIONS' DRIVE FOR BENEFITS

VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 16

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Unions' Drive for Benefits

IN A MORE Arcadian world the matter of personal and family security would rest primarily on each individual breadwinner's providing for the inevitable rainy days. To do this he would count on steady employment at a regular stipend lofty enough to permit substantial savings month by month. Under such universally unattainable circumstances, meeting the security problems of the minority who squandered rather than put their money by would be comparatively simple—the chief burden being to devise a system which would keep the unprovided for decently alive but on a scale considerably less inviting than that of the families which the *paterfamilias* himself had made secure.

In a society where wages provide little margin above day to day living expenses (according to American mass production standards) and where job security is more characteristic of government employees than any other group, the task of achieving social security is infinitely more difficult. During the past war-and-boom decade we have made a gesture in that direction by turning over to the federal government one percent of each worker's earnings plus an equal amount from company funds. The inadequacy of the social security reserves acquired by this means has yet to be demonstrated because of continuing high employment, but current talk about readjustment points to some sort of showdown at long last.

That is one factor in the unions' new demands for health, welfare and pension provisions in their impending contracts. The United Mine Workers reporting on the first twenty months of the operations of their welfare fund (now being built up by a 20 cent royalty on every ton of soft coal mined), reports expenditures of $68,000,000 for illness, disability, retirement and death benefits to over 260,000 people. Both the CIO in general and the United Auto Workers in particular have come out strong for a combination of government-supplied social security minimums for all Americans with additional social benefits provided by contract with management for members of their unions. For the moment the AFL is concentrating on legislation in Washington which will so extend and intensify benefits for all as to require four times the present employee-management payroll taxes plus further government appropriations.

One basic consideration is that the livelihood to which a man is entitled by his daily toil surely includes a measure of personal and family security. There is something highly appropriate about building this up week by week. The savings bank with its negligible rate of interest is not as inviting as it once was. Stocks and building-and-loan societies have proved too unreliable in recent years. Insurance costs too much. Credit unions are not an important element in the United States. So that where a man does have a slight margin between wages and living costs, it often requires heroic virtue of him to save regularly rather than to spend what's available toward some shiny latest model.

That is one cogent argument for automatic payroll savings or jointly built up benefit funds—and one which gains force from the generous pension plans so many companies set up for executives whose salaries for years have been enabling them to pile up extensive savings. But the unions' present drive for federal legislation raises serious questions. With the welter of difficulties created by skyrocketing government expenses and the burgeoning or federal bureaucracy out of all manageable proportions, the unions may well be taken to task for insisting on double social security. Where adequate reserves can be set up by union-management collaboration, pensions and other benefits for these workers and their dependents need not also be the charge of the federal government. It would be a salutary rein on the mounting, inevitable wasteful bureaucratic tide, if the government were to handle and disburse the social

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security funds only of those not adequately covered by union contracts.

At the outset of new bargaining periods union leaders invariably demand higher figures than they expect, but they are outdoing themselves this season in the extent of their demands for both government and company social security benefits.

The C. P. Itself on Trial

"DOESN'T that depend on whether it is a lie or the truth?" Judge Medina asked Abraham J. Isserman of defense counsel, on the first day of the trial of the eleven Communists, charged with having taught and advocated the overthrow of the US Government. Asked by policemen whether they were protesting the trial, one of the demonstrators, walking silently up and down the area outside the court, replied "I am walking to rest my feet." Another replied, "I am taking a walk." *Distinguo*. Obviously, this trial is absolutely legal, technically. The law under which the Communists are indicted, invented in 1940, is on the statute books, and has been used at least once before, when some Trotskyists were brought to trial in St. Paul, and the Communists, butter freezing to their gums, were piously on the prosecution's side. Today, the Communists "reject unequivocally" the Grand Jury's charge that the theories of Marx and Lenin advocate force and violence. That is the only issue: whether the doctrines held, and taught, by the defendants, advocate the overthrowing of this Government. If they do, then the Government must protect itself, for the government of this country has as much right as the least of its citizens, to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Catholics are as professionally committed to justice as they are to charity. And part of their duty, in justice, is that of accepting the possibility, and learning what are the conditions, of a just revolution. When, and where, such conditions exist, a just revolution, like a just war, becomes part of a Christian's duty of decision. But for the Communist, revolution is the preliminary prerequisite of any possible democracy. Neither Marx, nor Lenin, ever envisaged any possibility of ultimate compromise with capitalism, labor governments, or liberalism. Revolution for every communist is continuous, international and inevitable.

Democracy, as we mean it here, has hitherto included the right to believe, and to advocate, our own society's self-slaying. For if enough Americans voted Communist over a long enough time, then, since Communism advocates the overthrow of democratic government, and the extinguishing of democratic society, this government would commit hari-kari. Bank and ballot-box would both go. The political issue involved (and, let's face it, all of us are more interested in the political than in the constitutional or legal aspect of this trial) is how to reconcile this essential liberty of the individual, this freedom, these democratic rights, with the same individual's avowed intention of throwing them away, individually, or as soon as he has persuaded enough fellow-foxes to shed with him their tails, collectively?

The defense has to prove that all Marx and Lenin wrote, including the dramatic and minute instructions on the conduct of political trials, is a lie; and that their "unequivocal denial" of any intention of violence, is the whole truth.

That they should be so anxious, just at this moment, the very morning after Togliatti's speech, to prove their peacefulness, looks mighty like just another facet of Moscow's new peace drive. The Kremlin doth protest too much, we think.

Orange Juice, Coffee, and What?

IT WOULD have been pleasant this January to have been eating breakfasts in London. This implies no morbid yearning for the famous austerities, and, anyway, porridge daily during the dark of the winter doesn't seem to us disagreeable. Further, indeed, three British breakfasts a week would really have been enough for our purpose. Three days a week since New Year's the great London newspapers have been able to print six instead of the war-standard four pages. Controversy and criticism have grown quickly with this more generous allotment of newsprint—niggardly enough by local standards.

What to do with all those columns? "There is considerable criticism. . . . Charges that feature articles and cartoon strips have appeared, rather than a more comprehensive coverage of events of national and international importance, have been leveled at the London publishers over the last two weeks. The additional space given to crime news, as well as the new "entertainment" features of the papers, has been criticized. . . ." So arguments always tend to become metaphysical.

The London publishers are in a tough position, which may, of course, be good for the soul. For a while now, people will notice what they print, which should be an awful threat for newspaper men. There is still a bitter problem of selection; for six pages, after all, would hardly take care of Gimbel's in New York. They can't just print everything, go whole hog, and let the public beware for itself. They still face the issue of "Little Abner *vs.* Trygve Lie," "Moon Mullins *anti* Molotov," "Terror in Tallahassee *against* Some Aspects of the Budget Problem as Presented to the Eighty-first Congress." Who should determine these things; and whom should you criticize for the actual determination?

There is a rumble in the critical chorus, on both sides of the Atlantic, hinting that the Government should determine these things, and the rich press

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patrons should get the criticism. The Government allots the paper; the rich newspaper owners are rich. After all.

These things we do not know, certainly, on a very high level of intellectual appraisal and judgment. We feel, however, rather definitely, naturally, a couple of things. The Government ought not govern this matter. The rich newspaper proprietors ought to be criticized and shamed all around the Atlantic Ocean, irregardless the merits of the present debate. Likewise the public who buy papers and other reading and looking material. This particular month, London publishers and customers may be showing rare good sense in going after six more pages of nonsense rather than quantities more of grim and respectable "comprehensive coverage of international importance." But if so, it would be really rare good sense, because the ordinary run of printed stuff we buy is bad: installment purchase of the dark ages.

Protestants Point at Secularism in Education

MEETING recently in Washington, the American Catholic bishops declared that secularism is "the most deadly menace to our Christian and American way of living." Secularism, which is the failure to center life in God, cannot, they warned, be fought with pious phrases: "constructive effort is called for, to counteract this corrosive influence in every phase of life."

Last week the National Protestant Council on Higher Education came forward with a proposal for some constructive effort against secularism in their colleges and universities. Meeting in New York, the Council's committee on curriculum addressed itself specifically to this challenge: "We are vitally concerned with the development of economics teaching and the counteraction of Communist ideology. We feel that American economic enterprise has in it the content and attitudes which, if properly developed, could successfully combat Communism." Somehow, the committee feels, the colleges have not properly integrated Christian principles with economic doctrine and practice. Looking around for the reason for this failure, the committee points a direct finger: with the advent of public higher education and "the accompanying secularization of education," Christian colleges have foregone their own function and have "simulated their tax-supported competitors and bartered away their priceless heritage for what has turned out to be largely a mess of pottage."

This action by a committee representing twenty-six Protestant denominations may hopefully encourage other Americans to take stock, and to wonder how American life, founded on Christian principles, can long survive under a system of education which separates religion from other formal studies. The assumption, under such a system, is that somewhere, somehow, American students will pick up enough Christian principles to integrate these with economic practice, in order to preserve the American society we set out to establish here. Now, it would seem, something more is needed: the committee feels that economics and Christian principles must be more actively fused in the classroom.

Even more pointedly, the Protestant Council committee puts an issue squarely up to all Christians: to the extent that we secularize Christian higher education, to that extent do we lose identity and the reason for our existence separate from public education. In posing this issue, the committee has focused its attention on the economic necessity of opposing communism: but actually, the present economic crisis only points up more urgently this frightful and potentially disastrous cleavage between religion and other disciplines in public and denominational education in America —a cleavage that we have delicately juggled and played with here for years. To run hurriedly now to dig into the best defenses we have is better than not to dig in at all. But as a matter of fact, the hour is late and it will take much more than the fear of economic catastrophe to convince us surely that we ought to re-invigorate American society and education at their Christian foundations.

Garment Industry Council

AT THE beginning of the year, in Miami Beach, an example was presented to economic worriers which deserves more note than it received. The National Coat and Suit Industry Recovery Board held its annual meeting then and there. This Board represents 2,000 manufacturers and 60,000 union workers. And it is a very tough business, as fame and fable have long pictured it—but not, largely, for the reasons that fable has emphasized. The industry presents the sympathetic spectacle of many small business units operating between huge entities in retailing, and comparatively large corporations supplying fabrics. And these small units must anticipate their fabric needs and production schedules long before the season when their product gets to the public. The industry group feel that they have gone a long way to meet their difficult problems, in ways that other industries could well study seriously. In general, as the *Times* report says, "ample demonstration has been given . . . that flexibility of operation inherent in small business, backed up by industry planning and outstanding labor relations, has upset the calculations of economic theorists who have been predicting another boom and bust era." Intelligence and cooperation can meet a large portion of the problems which are lazily attacked by monopoly, bureaucratization and the mortmain of centralization. Boom and bust eras are not avoided by sitting back and watching the big machine grind to a halt.

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Italy, 1949: Still Coasting Along?

Necessary reforms are still to be carried out

Leo J. Wollemborg

DURING the first months of 1948, Italy was featured in our press, day after day, as the hottest battleground of the cold war against Communism. Then the election returns gave the democratic forces a decisive majority. These forces—we thought—were sure to remain firmly in control at least for a few years. During those years, Italy's substantial share in the ERP would provide the material resources for helping the country along the road to social reform and economic rehabilitation without dangerously rocking the very foundations of Italian society.

We thought we could relax and turn our attention to other trouble spots. Italy dropped from the headlines.

Now it is time to take again a good look. Are Italy's democratic forces availing themselves of their opportunity? Have they made at least a good start to eliminate those material conditions whose inexorable pressure causes people to stop thinking and turn in desperation to the reactionary Right or to the revolutionary Left?

So far, the record is anything but impressive.

*

The Christian-Democrats emerged from the April elections as the dominant factor in Italian political life. They polled 48 percent of the votes and secured 307 out of 574 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Those figures, however, did not accurately reflect the actual strength of the Party in the country. Hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of people who had little use for Signor De Gasperi's party, voted for it as for the only alternative to Communism.

Some among the Christian-Democrats took the election returns at their face value. Others sought to exploit them to turn the dominant position of their party into a "régime." Said Interior Minister Scelba: "Italians must get accustomed to see Christian-Democrats not only in all government posts but also at the head of banks, industries, etc." More thoughtful Christian-Democrats felt the responsibility of representing not only their own party but also those who had given it a limited mandate. De Gasperi repudiated Scelba's statement and showed real statesmanship in calling representatives of other democratic parties to share in the government.

Still, the fact remained that the winner in April was more a coalition born of expediency than a single political party. There was, as a consequence, more than the usual share of debts to be paid and of promises to make good. Hence, the wavering course of the De Gasperi Government and above all its reluctance to come to grips with the most urgent and most controversial issues.

Land reform is perhaps the most crucial of these issues. Here, the Christian-Democrats are caught between the landowners and the peasants. If they go ahead with some sweeping plan, they will lose the landowners' support to some outright conservative party; if they don't do anything, they will lose the peasant vote to the Communists.

The Christian-Democrats are in a similar predicament when it comes to industry and its reorganization. Here they must steal the Communist thunder by satisfying the needs and demands of the industrial workers in the North; at the same time, they must take into account the wishes and entrenched interests of big industry, traditionally accustomed to have the State underwrite its losses and forget about its profits.

Of the other democratic parties, both Liberals and Republicans took a terrific beating at the polls. These parties have fulfilled their historic rôle in the political field and are apparently unable to bring a concrete contribution to the solution of today's social and economic problems. Hence their lack of popular appeal. With the election of Signor Einaudi to the Presidency of the Republic, the Liberals' most influential man has been lifted out of active politics. The Republicans are represented in the Government by Foreign Minister Sforza and by Defense Minister Pacciardi, two personalities of some standing and prestige. The extreme weakness of their party both in Parliament and in the country, however, decisively limits their influence on the general policy of the Government.

The Independent (Right-Wing) Socialists are in a somewhat stronger position. They have a fairly large following among the industrial workers and the middle class in Northern Italy. In the Government, they occupy a number of key positions which should give them a large measure of control over economic and social policies

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(Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ivan Matteo Lombardo; Ministry of Merchant Marine, Giuseppe Saragat; ERP affairs, Roberto Tremelloni). Right now, however, their freedom of action is limited by the fight they are engaging in on two fronts. They are trying to win the workers away from the Communist bloc and find a common platform for the industrial masses and for the lower middle class. Their program for social reforms and a planned economy is facing stiff opposition from most Christian-Democrats and conservative allies.

*

The Communists—stunned by their defeat at the polls, weakened by their obeisance to the Cominform line, divided among themselves (the "toughs" and the "softs")—have gone through a period of uncertainty, bitterness and confusion. Some felt bitter about Russia: they had been let down. Many were critical of Togliatti's "soft" strategy which had failed to bring them victory at the polls. All resented the attitude of their allies, most of whom appeared ready to desert them in defeat. Here a great opportunity was lost by the democratic parties. By gentle and skilful handling of the situation, it might have been possible to detach most Left-Wing Socialists (PSI) from their Communist allegiance. Many of them, led by former Interior Minister Romita, felt that they had been the victims and the dupes of the so-called "unity of action pact" with the Communists. They read the election returns as a warning that their party must be independent or condemned to eventual extinction. On the other hand, they thought that a strong and reunited Socialist Party could still play an important rôle holding the balance between the Christian-Democrats and the Communists.

But Independent Socialists and Christian-Democrats did not appear to know enough or care enough about such a development. The Left-Wing Socialists were either snubbed or pressed too hard into becoming overnight anti-Communist. As a result, the PSI remained faithful to a policy of collaboration with the Communists—even though the "unity of action pact" was shelved and men like Nenni and Basso were compelled to give way to leaders less inclined to toe the Moscow line.

There is a similar pattern in labor politics. Determined Christian-Democratic pressure for a split in the Communist-dominated CGIL (General Confederation of Labor) produced the split all right. But so far, the new "Free Confederation of Workers" is little more than a purely Christian-Democratic affair.

Among the Communists themselves, the failure of the Togliatti line did temporarily strengthen the hand of such "toughs" as Secchia and Longo. Togliatti is a politician; Secchia and Longo are both fanatics. Secchia, a cold bureaucrat; Longo a street-fighting stormtrooper. They both favor a large scale epuration in the swollen ranks of the party (2,200,000 members) to weed out the "lukewarm, intellectualistic" elements. They both think in terms of a hard core of thoroughly organized, thoroughly reliable men ready to spring into action at any time.

There is no indication, however, that the Italian Communists are planning any large-scale violence—in the near future, at least. They know that, with their own forces alone, they cannot hope to seize power in Italy. Any such attempt would be opposed by the overwhelming majority of the people and would be quickly crushed by reorganized and reliable Police and Army forces. Events following Togliatti's attempted assassination last July gave conclusive proof of this. It was also indicated at the time that the Italian Communist Party, as such, would not or could not go all-out for a nation-wide insurrection even when circumstances appeared to be right. The fact is that Communist plans contemplate such an insurrection only in case of an international crisis and then in cooperation with Communist action in neighboring countries. Possibly those plans are undergoing revision now, following the break between Tito and the Cominform.

All in all, the Italian Communists are likely to follow a middle-of-the-road course. Togliatti is back as the recognized leader of the party and his ideas will again play a major rôle in shaping its strategy. The Government's foreign policy will continue to be denounced for aligning Italy with the "war-mongering" West against Russia. Labor agitation for higher wages will continue to be fostered and exploited to embarrass the Government and hinder economic recovery. The main goal will remain the same; to secure the sympathies of the workers and of the lower middle class by posing as champions of peace abroad and of better working conditions at home.

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It is on the economic front that Italy's democratic government faces its stiffest test.

After all, in Italy as anywhere else, the average citizen judges his government by what he can buy with the money he earns. Since the April elections, wages have risen very little, if at all. Prices, after a fresh upsurge during the summer months, are now back around the April levels. But inflationary pressure has not yet abated. The Government is still running heavily in the red and to make up for the deficit it still prints currency at the rate of 10-15 billion lire a month. Main inflationary factors remain government spending and high production costs in industry.

There are today over one million Government employees in Italy—an increase of 30 percent in the last ten years. Their average pay is very low,

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even for Italian standards (about $2 a day); but the total payroll accounts for 44 percent of all Government expenditures. Possibly half of those employees are excess baggage. In fact, their very presence merely adds to the incredible amount of red tape smothering Italy's economic life. To discharge them, however, would only add to the country's unemployment roll which is still around 2,000,000—or almost 10 percent of the total labor force.

Factories are similarly overstaffed. Best estimates are that about 300,000 excess workers are carried on industrial payrolls. Here too, the individual pay envelope is very thin (between $1.50 and $2 a day), but the total runs again into staggering figures. Padded payrolls, plus worn equipment and in some cases poor management, keep production costs so high that many Italian industries are undersold by foreign manufacturers in their own home markets. But once more, to discharge the excess workers would only mean to put them on relief as there are no other job opportunities.

Here we come up against Italy's basic problem —which makes her position so different from that of the other Marshall Plan countries. Italy's problem is not merely a *post-war* problem, to wit, a problem of rehabilitation and reconstruction. It is the old, heartbreaking problem of overpopulation. Too many mouths to feed—and not enough land to produce the food they need. Too many workers—and not enough capital to develop decent jobs for them. And while the population increases every year by over 400,000 units, job opportunities rise by less than 100,000 annually.

To solve the problem, foreign capital must be brought into the country to provide new jobs in industry and agriculture; at the same time, decent jobs must be found abroad for perhaps two or three million Italians. So argues the Italian Government; and no doubt, the only hope for a permanent solution lies in that direction, through collective, international action on a grand scale.

*

In the meantime, however, the Italian Government could and should push through, without further delay, a few basic "reforms." Long overdue in Italy and pledged anew by the democratic parties during the election campaign, these reforms are still in the blueprint stage. Their speedy enactment is imperative if the country is to take full advantage of her own resources and of available foreign aid:

1) *A limited but concrete land reform.*

The Communists advocate a plan which on paper looks so simple and promising that it can not but strongly appeal to Italy's 4,000,000 landless peasants. According to this plan, a flat limitation is to be imposed on all private land-ownership. The limit is to be set at 100 hectares (about 250 acres), but in some cases it could be as low as 50 hectares. All property exceeding the limit is to be parcelled out among the peasants on a 99-year nominal lease.

The Christian-Democrats too have made some very definite promises both before and after the general elections. A plan drawn up by Agriculture Minister Segni contemplates the expropriation of all property, the assessed revenue of which is higher than 10,000 gold lire (about $3,000). The State would fix the amount of the compensation to be paid to landowners, would finance the operation and would choose among the peasants the recipients of the land.

The Segni plan, as it was to be expected, has met with strong criticism and determined opposition. It has been pointed out that it would involve an enormous financial burden for the State (perhaps 500 billion lire over a period of five years); that it would actually benefit only one out of eight landless peasants and farm laborers; and above all that it would cause a great deal of confusion, instability and uncertainty resulting in a sharp drop in agricultural production over a period of years.

These objections against the Segni Plan are voiced by the National Association of Landowners (CONFIDA), backed by all conservative elements in the Christian-Democratic Party, in Parliament and in the Government itself. As a result, the Segni Plan is currently undergoing revision at the Cabinet level and its submission to Parliament has been tentatively postponed until spring. It is expected that even so it will face a stiff test and further delays and revisions before being acted upon.

In the meantime, not even a start has been made toward the breaking up of large estates. As things stand today, half of Italy's cultivated land is in the hands of only 10,000 owners, many of them absentees. On the other side of the fence, are 4,000,000 peasants, and 2,400,000 of them are farm hands working only 150 days a year; 400,000 more agricultural workers are at present classified as unemployed.

The failure of the Government to face squarely the issue and enact an agrarian legislation not only perpetuates the plight of the peasants but also discourages landowners from investing further capital in the improvement of properties as long as their ultimate fate remains in doubt.

2) *A reorganization of industry.*

It is generally admitted that Italian industry today is a machine too expensive to run. Its products are too expensive to be marketed either at home or abroad. Economic stagnation results and we witness the paradox of a recession due to under-consumption in a country where most ne-

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cessities are just becoming available after a long period of scarcity.

Hundreds of factories—mostly leftovers from Mussolini's "self-sufficiency" era—would collapse overnight if the Government stopped subsidizing them with the taxpayers' money (Italian and US). This money, invested in the financing of really vital concerns, would provide new and better jobs and allow production at competitive prices.

The Italian Government has available the tools to carry out this drastic and long overdue reorganization. It is itself the largest industrial employer. Through the IRI (the Italian RFC), it holds a controlling interest in 356 concerns, employing 230,000 people and accounting for 20 percent of the personnel and 36 percent of the capital of all Italian stock companies. The IRI controlled group includes hotels and telephone companies, blast furnaces and mechanical industries, banks, shipyards and power plants. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that in Italy the Government owns and operates the railroads and telegraph lines and that the manufacturing and the sale of tobacco are a State monopoly.

It has been argued for years that the Government should stop pouring money into economically unsound concerns and that control of industrial enterprises in general should be gradually restored to private enterprise. So far, nothing has been done and the IRI group is expected to require a further financial outlay of some 130 billion lire during the 1948-49 fiscal year.

3) *A new system of taxation.*

According to official figures, 70 percent of the people in Italy have an income of less than 520,000 lire (about $850) a year; over-all average for the nation is about 100,000 lire ($160). Still, the Government derives 37 percent of its revenue from indirect taxation which hits all classes regardless of income. Custom duties and excise taxes account for 20 percent, while direct taxation represents only 24 percent of total Government revenue. Moreover, most wealthy people manage not to pay even their share of direct taxes. Quite a few openly brag about their success in cheating the tax collector—an old and accepted custom in Italy anyway. Most firms privately admit keeping two sets of books and justify themselves on grounds of "legitimate defense." "If we were naive enough—they argue—to show the tax collector our real figures, he would not believe us. He would raise those figures three or four times, just to be on the safe side, and tax us accordingly; we would be out of business in no time at all."

The Government has repeatedly announced plans for a complete overhauling of the taxation system. A progressive personal income tax should be introduced some time in the future, replacing most of the 70-odd direct levies presently in the books. More efficient and up-to-date methods of assessment and severe penalties for tax dodgers have also been promised. But so far the only concrete step taken has been the timid reduction of the general entry tax from 4 percent to 3 percent, effective January 1, 1949.

Finance Minister Vanoni admitted that the general entry tax, which applies every time that a product changes hands, is socially unfair and economically unsound. His argument, however, is that the tax represents the Treasury's single biggest source of income: it is expected to yield over 200 billion lire during the current fiscal year.

Signor Vanoni's argument reflects a Government attitude which is not confined to the question of taxation alone. They realize the shortcomings of the present set-up, but lack the boldness to conceive and the courage to put into operation a completely new machinery.

★

More than three years have elapsed since V-E Day.

Between May, 1945, and April, 1948, the two most immediate goals have been achieved in Italy:

1) the country has been kept alive—mostly thanks to US money (about $2,000,000,000 of it);

2) order has been maintained and free elections assured.

In April, 1948, enactment of the ERP and the Communist defeat at the polls should have marked the beginning of the third phase: the phase of economic reconstruction. But reconstruction cannot get really under way until positive action has been taken on the paramount issues of Government spending and taxation, of land reform and industrial reorganization.

Obviously this action involves new sacrifices for the people and unpopularity for Government.

The "haves" don't like to see their profits curtailed and their taxes increased. The "have nots" don't like the prospect of an increase in unemployment, however temporary, or of a shift to unfamiliar jobs and surroundings. Nobody likes to be reminded that the bill of a lost war has yet to be paid in full. And the temptation is strong, for both Government and Parliament, to keep coasting along hoping that somehow the ERP or something else will turn the trick for them.

Still, it is up to them to rally the spirit and the resources of the country around an organic program inspired solely by the general interest and to enforce such a program despite the fresh hardships it involves for the special interests.

Without this leadership by Government and Parliament, no foreign aid, regardless of amount, can secure for the Italian people a lasting improvement of their living standards. And the Communists would be ready to exploit such a failure to persuade the Italians that America and democracy have let them down.

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A Voice From St. Louis

EDWARD F. MEAGHER

THE EDITORS OF *America*, on December 18, 1948, published an article entitled "D-Day for Ariel." "Ariel," in this title, is a symbol for "contemporaneous Catholic Art"; "D-Day" refers to an artistic liberation and to a discussion that has been going on for some time: namely, the liberation of certain Catholic art from its present low estate to a position of greater purity, and to a renewed contact with the vital truths and cultural heritage of the Christian faith. The author of this article is Father Louis F. Doyle, S.J., a professor of English at St. Louis University.

Father Doyle believes that art will be re-invigorated or liberated principally by artists themselves; he is disturbed at philosophers who invade the art world with "philosophical pronouncements on art." He writes: "it may be said that never, from the beginning of art, has any philosopher ever solved a single problem or contributed to the search for a lost path a ray of light that has done more than make the darkness visible." Philosophers "sit in an ivory tower," or "pontificate on art from the clouds of the metaphysical empyrean."

For one philosopher, Father Doyle reserves the epithet, "the voice from Sinai." This man is Father David Ross King, whose article "To Serve in Truth" appeared in THE COMMONWEAL of October 29, 1948, an article which so stimulated Father Doyle that he wrote his rebuttal for the editors of *America*. His rebuttal has two purposes: to disagree with David Ross King, and to make some art pronouncements of his own. Father Doyle's pronouncements on art indicate the reasons for his grievances with the voices from Sinai, and more generally, they attract attention to the condition of art, secular and Christian, in our society.

Here is one of Louis F. Doyle's statements: "In art no objective certitude is possible." Although Father Doyle appears quite certain himself saying this, his position may be something less than convincing. The work of art, for one thing, exists. It is something, it is an object—*Hamlet*, or Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, or Rouault's *The Old Clown*. I am certain that this object exists. Therefore, about it I have objective certitude.

Beyond this first degree of objective certitude, we have further certainties about the interior nature of the work: Hamlet is emotionally disturbed, the chorus in the Beethoven symphony sings certain significant words, the Old Clown is not smiling. How far we can extend these certainties will, of course, depend upon the nature of the work and upon our capacity to understand it; Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* and Hopkins' *Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves* are not immediately transparent works about which one has complete objective certitude. Nor should he expect to have complete objective certitude: a work of art can involve material, emotional, rational and intuitive realities which may not be subjected exhaustively to scientific dissection. But to say that "no objective certitude is possible" is to deny the existential requirements of human art and human knowledge.

Not only that, but to deny all objective certitude would seem to place all criticism, and all critics, in a somewhat embarrassing predicament. For example, if someone were to say that *Forever Amber* is as serious a work as *The Heart of the Matter*, I might want to disagree; but in order to establish my disagreement, I should have to refer to specific situations and events in both novels—about which, to believe Father Doyle, one simply has no objective certitude, no certain objective reference upon which to base a judgment. Objectively, *Forever Amber* is as good as *The Heart of the Matter*. Criticism is rationally emptied of value. Now if all this seems absurd, or unjust to Father Doyle, it is hardly more absurd than Father Doyle's own conclusion from his own premises. He writes: "if I were to maintain that Father King's esteemed M. Cocteau knows no more about Art than I do, I should be temerarious, no doubt, but logically as safe as George Bernard Shaw asserting that he is a greater dramatist than Shakespeare. Who could disprove it?" And no one really will be able to answer Father Doyle on his own terms, either: he has seen to that by removing the possibility of objective certitude, a necessary component of literary judgments. For him, objectively verifiable standards of literary value are impossible.

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What do we have then? Another of Louis Doyle's pronouncements is this: "What passes for certitude is merely the recorded reactions of successive generations of countless individuals, 'moral' certitude." Although this assertion has a sufficiently authoritative sound, it, too, may actually be something less than convincing. For if these "countless individuals" have no objective certitude about the work of art, they literally do not *know* what they are talking about. How does one individual, listening to the *Ninth Symphony*, know that he hears generally the same symphony that another individual sitting next to him hears? He doesn't. This is not a question of varying degrees of appreciation. This is the question: how do you pass judgment on a work about which "no objective certitude is possible?" With that starting point, what does it matter what name you use, what meaning has "moral certitude" or any certitude—how can it be called "certitude" at all? "Moral certitude," in this case, is pure impression-

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ism, a private impression of an object that may or may not exist; collected together, "countless individual" impressions ("moral certitude") about an object that may or may not exist hardly constitute certitude of any kind whatever.

Getting down more specifically to Catholic art, Father Doyle has this to say: "When M. Cocteau wrote M. Maritain: 'Art for art's sake, art for the people's sake are equally absurd. I propose art for God,' was he saying anything of any conceivable value to a Catholic artist? What need has God of Art? If Art is not for the people's sake, then why are Father King and company so greatly exercised over the low quality of Catholic art? Since the will for the deed is acceptable to Him, why worry so long as Catholic art does its sorry best?"

Here too, Father Doyle's questions do not quite put every doubt or possible reply to silence. For in reaction to the first two of these questions, we may also ask: what need has God of the world? Of man? Of any creature? None, theologians tell us: He is sufficient unto Himself. But as a matter of fact, God has created these things: the world is, man is, various creatures are, art is. And every one of these creatures is potentially redeemable, and is created precisely for the glory of the Creator. What else did Christ mean, saying: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." Or why do Christians consecrate all their activities "ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus," that in all things God may be glorified? Now this is not a plea for didactic art: Father King, citing Maritain, makes the meaning clear: "Art itself goes spontaneously to God. To God not as man's end, not in the moral line. To God as the universal principle of all form and all clarity." God needs art as He needs every creature. To deny this, on the grounds that theoretically God has no need of art, is to overlook the fact that actually art is a human faculty and production in existence. In effect, Father Doyle says: God might not have created the artistic faculty, He really doesn't need it. We might ignore the real world. This, it seems to me, is "ivory towerism" at dizzy heights from the man who berates Father King and others who "sit in an ivory tower."

Actually both Cocteau and Maritain may be saying something of value to Christian artists when they say that "art is for God," or that "art goes spontaneously to God." But, Father Doyle says not. More than that, Father Doyle believes that if you say art is for God, you walk right into a trap. This is the trap: if art is for God, then to satisfy God with art, all you have to do is to have a good will. The will for the deed is enough for God. Why worry about the low quality of art itself, why worry if you produce monstrosities? He writes: "the will for the deed is acceptable to Him, why worry so long as Catholic art does its sorry best?" Now this supposition has at least two deficiencies: first, this would not seem to be exactly an orthodox view of the Christian will, and second, "art for God" is much more than just moral innocence. The following is what Father Doyle would impose on us: I think this painting is a work of art glorifying religious truth: what if this "sorry best" is a monstrosity? Why worry? I mean well, God is happy. Neither Cocteau nor Maritain, of course, can actually be led into this trap suggested by Louis Doyle, simply because: first: they do not try to isolate the will from the deed in any such mental gymnastics as this. For them, a will that is "acceptable to God" does not ignore the quality of its deeds or products, and secondly, for them "art for God" is more than moral innocence: it is also *art,* which seeks the perfection of its product always. That Father Doyle should pose this trap, as a dilemma, is both naive and presumptuous of him. For he is the only one who even suggests that, in "art for God," the will, so divorced from the deed, is a will or an art acceptable to God in any case other than ignorance.

★

What then, if anything, does Father Doyle think should be done about art? On one point, at least, he would agree with the voices from Sinai: someone will have to rescue his "Ariel." He writes: "the poor little tyke needs help, a lot of help." But philosophers won't do the rescuing: "when advances are made in art, they are made by artists, not by reason of abstract thinkers." Again, however, Father Doyle's authoritative generalization is not altogether conclusive. For while artists will surely make whatever advances are made, it is quite possible that artists will do this with the assistance and "by reason of abstract thinkers." One illustrious artist and a Jesuit, Gerard Manley Hopkins, thought he owed a considerable gratitude to the philosopher Duns Scotus. Hopkins once wrote: "At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences . . . and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy of God. But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or the sea I thought of Scotus." Hopkins' art was both substantiated and partly inspired by Scotism. And Hopkins, fully as much as Louis Doyle, could be angered by intruding philosophers and critics; another time he wrote: "a perfect critic is very rare . . . the most inveterate fault of critics is the tendency to cramp and hedge in by rules the free movements of genius, so that I should say . . . the first requisite for a critic is liberality, and the second liberality, and the third, liberality." Even feeling this way, Hopkins did not for that reason ignore critics or

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philosophers: he was eager and happy to learn from Scotus, and Hopkins himself became a scrupulously exact, contemplative artist-philosopher: his art alone is sufficient evidence to disprove Louis Doyle's dictum that "never has any philosopher . . . contributed to the search for a lost path a ray of light that has done more than make the darkness visible." Hopkins advanced the art of English poetry and, contrary to Louis Doyle, this advance was realized with the assistance and partly "by reason of abstract thinkers."

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Most of all, though, Father Doyle is bitter at abstract thinkers who make a more direct examination of art, and who talk about the subject publicly. Too often these philosophers use the wrong technique: for as Louis Doyle sees them, they are all angry, dangerous long-faces who go around scaring people. "Ariel" must be coddled, he believes. "A little simplicity, a little fellow-feeling, a little humor might help." Philosophers are reminded that expressions "hurled from the alpine heights in horned anger will only make the little ones of Christ hug their esthetic heresies the tighter." Sweetness-and-light is Louis Doyle's prescription. And apparently the editors of *America,* who have published this article without editorial reservations, do not shy from Louis Doyle's statements nor from his prescription, although Father LaFarge, in a subsequent article, indicates some minor doubts. For a subtitle under "D-Day for Ariel" the editors and the author make a quick shift from the beaches to the parlor and call this whole business a "tempest in the critics' teapot." If it means anything, the subtitle would suggest that this discussion is subject-matter for a tiff among old ladies: a fit topic for a rainy day, but really, let's not get red in the face about art, of all things.

Well now, patience may indeed be the only way to help "the poor little tyke," the only way not to scare "the little ones" who "hug their esthetic heresies the tighter." But there is always that point to worry about at which patience degenerates and becomes a mask for the spineless collaboration of the lukewarm. The purity, the integrity of truth is then rescued by the hand of fierceness, and with a mouth not too timid to shout the truth from the house-tops. There are times when collaboration is collusion and when mildness deceives. If the philosophers are angry, artists will not escape anger by gagging philosophers. Even in art, ten thousand of the lukewarm become precursors, preparing the way for one artist-prophet, a Leon Bloy who is violent enough to stick them with the knife of truth, and who will neither compromise nor collaborate with the faint-hearted until they have the courage to drop their "esthetic heresies." There have been desecrators of the temple before this, and it was Christ who dealt with them: when patience was no longer enough, He raised his hand and drove the moneychangers out, and He was angry.

Communications

RETURN FOR MARSHALL AID

Collegeville, Minn.

TO the Editors: In your issue of January 14th, you complain that compared with Austria and Italy, Britain and France have disappointing results to show in return for ECA, and with regard to the former country you say the following: "Her visible exports to the US are running at a little more than one-third of her imports. And austerity has increased rather than decreased; the coal board has missed its production target by at least two million tons."

The implications of your remarks are somewhat misleading since you put the facts in an entirely false context. It is, for instance, quite true that British imports from the US greatly exceed visible exports to that country, but you omit to say that Britain has always had an adverse balance with the U. S. and has every intention of going on having it, nor is there any reason under the principles of multilateral trade why she shouldn't. The aim is to offset an adverse balance with one country by surpluses with others.

You say that the coal board has missed its production target by two million tons, but fail to point out that this figure is approximately one per cent of total production—hardly a case of scandalous failure. You also fail to point out that this failure, such as it is, is largely the result of manpower deficiency which in its turn is the result of the enforced export drive occasioned very largely by the loss of British over-seas investments. These investments in pre-war days helped substantially to pay for British imports, and their sale, largely to the United States, is one of the main causes of British impoverishment.

Finally you do not say a word about the fact that, as a result of this export drive, British exports have increased about 30 percent over the pre-war volume—an achievement which, unless I am very much mistaken, compares favorably with that of other countries.

As to your remarks about austerity and why its continuance should be an occasion of criticism, I am completely mystified. Austerity is one of the means by which Britain is very slowly climbing back to solvency and it is a means that will in all probability have to be used for many years after ECA has run out. I cannot see why a creditor should make it a reproach to his debtor, that the debtor at the cost of considerable self-sacrifice and self-discipline is doing his utmost to cut expenditure.

It seems to me that the unfortunate British are on the horns of a dilemma. If they do not practice austerity they will most certainly, and not altogether unjustly, be called wasters and parasites, whereas if they do practice it they will apparently lay themselves open to THE COMMONWEAL'S displeasure. Apparently one cannot please everybody.

J. L. BENVENISTI.

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CATHOLICS AND THE UNIONS

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: It is with considerable regret that I take issue with Father George A. Kelly with regard to the techniques and methods of the ACTU. Father Kelly, in his eagerness to take Father George J. Higgins and Father John Francis Cronin of the NCWC apart, so belabored the topic that he went completely off the deep end at the other corner of the dock. Or better still, to quote the colloquialism of Abraham Lincoln, "he met himself comin' out of the same hole he went in at."

Father Cronin, in his book *Catholic Social Action,* merely summed up the very real concern of a great many priests, labor leaders and union members with regard to ACTU. Father Kelly disposes of the priests by charging them with being connected with the Social Action Department of the NCWC, a horrendous charge. The labor leader critics, says Father Kelly, are motivated by a desire for power in their own hands. I am surprised that Father Kelly resorts to the technique of name-calling.

As the first president of the Chicago Chapter of the ACTU and permanent chairman of the First National Convention of the organization, I have been somewhat active in trying to implement Encyclical teaching among union members, not because the Pope wrote it, but because it makes sense. I draw no specific warrant, as does Father Kelly, from any one paragraph of *Quadragesimo Anno.* I consider all of the paragraphs important, and I point out that this particular Encyclical was addressed to me as much as it was to Father Kelly.

Pope Pius XI and Pope Leo XIII as well, have pointed out that workers must be free to form unions and draft their own rules. To me, this statement constitutes a moral grant of autonomy upon all union members, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and atheist alike, along with a moral obligation to see to it that the rules are designed for the common good. It is the mission of all of us inside or outside the ACTU to carry out this obligation. Because of their proximity to the teaching of the Holy Father, Catholics have a special obligation.

Father Kelly becomes quite confused in his insistence that anybody and everybody has a right to interfere in the operation of a union. I devote a good deal of time and attention to the affairs of my union, the American Newspaper Guild. I reject any claimed right to interfere in the internal affairs of any other CIO affiliate or any other union on the face of the earth. I believe I can make a major contribution to the entire labor movement, (1) by seeing to it, insofar as it is possible, that the American Newspaper Guild is a good union; (2) by doing what I can to imbue all other union members, insofar as my feeble powers permit, with an understanding of sound moral principles.

If Father Kelly is such an avowed advocate of the right to interfere, why does he become so indignant about Father Cronin's alleged interference in the affairs of the ACTU? Does he admit the "right" of the Kremlin and its stooges to tell the Holy Father what to teach on social matters?

I have never, of course, been a member of the New York ACTU. I was, however, an active member both in Chicago and in Detroit. In both of those cities, we sought no commendation for our work. We likewise did not evade criticism especially when it came from Catholic priests and laymen. The ACTU leaders with whom I associated in the past voiced criticisms themselves in the councils of the organization in an all-out effort to eliminate the complaints, real or potential, which Father Cronin reports most objectively.

I believe the ACTU has a mission, but it isn't the mission that Father Kelly ascribes to it.

HARRY READ.

STATISM

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: It is one of the debating tricks of the reactionaries to raise the issue of Statism where it has no relevance whatever and to side step the real issue—in America anyhow—which is the unrestrained jungle economics beloved of Herbert Hoover and others versus rational measures of control applied by government for the good of all society. For this reason, virtually all that has recently been written in THE COMMONWEAL by a Mr. Walter John Marx has no point whatever save to evade this issue on which need it be said the Popes have spoken FOR governmental control and to raise the dread bogy of Communism. I insist that this is intellectually dishonest and it attaints both the recent work of Eugene Lyons and Mr. Marx's several glosses thereon.

G. R. GARRETT.

A GIFT

San Quentin, Calif.

TO the Editors: During the past year, we have received your generous donation of Catholic reading material quite regularly. I wish to assure you that this gift has been most acceptable to our Catholic men. It has helped to keep them in touch with Catholic thought and practice. In this way you have made a valuable contribution to the work of the Catholic Chaplains.

Reverend EDWARD J. DINGBERG,
Assistant Catholic Chaplain

FOOD AND CLOTHING PARCELS

ONE of our readers calls to our attention the plight of the Visitation Monastery in Grasse for which we printed an appeal in these columns a year ago. According to the current issue of *Catholic Missions*: "Sister Marie-Christine of the Visitation Monastery, Grasse, France, is destitute, with a yearly income of $150 for 29 nuns." Contributions should be sent to local offices of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith or its national office at 109 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

Another reader tells of a Mrs. M. van der Aa, 44 Weverssingel, Amersfoort, Holland, who "makes clothing for war victims—men, women and children—and she asks for good warm materials, knitting wools, or warm clothing in really good condition . . ." CARE wool packages should be sent to her directly at Amersfoort as above, while other parcels should go (with her name and address) to United Self Service to Holland, 70 Pine Street, New York 5, N. Y.

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The Poor Clares of Rome recently have made a special appeal for funds to carry on their work among the destitute. All remittances should be made out to Rev. Eugenius Lunter, and sent to St. Clare's Monastery, Via Vitellia (ang. Via Casaletto) Rome, Italy.

There have also been recent appeals for:

Moniales Benedictines
Abbaye de l'Immaculee Conception
Madiran, near Lourdes
Hte. Pyrennees, France

Benedictine Adorers of the Sacred Heart
Tyburn Convent
9 Hyde Park Place
London, W. 2, England

Rev. Mother Superior
Waisenhaus
Köln-Sulz
Rhineland, British Zone
Germany

The latest news from CARE (50 Broad Street, New York 4, N. Y.), whose food and clothing packages cost $10 each, is of a $4 vegetable seed package endorsed by Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan. ("Seeds are not being delivered in Great Britain because authorities there feel that the present supply is adequate.)

As Others See It

Views of Man

A LEADING article in the January issue of the *Review of Politics* of Notre Dame, Ind., by Joseph Pieper makes the following comment:

> Man, the Christian, albeit the perfect Christian, remains a creature, a finite being, even in eternal life. Now there certainly is more than one way of interpreting this ultimate Christian idea, not only "theorretically" but also historically. There are, for instance, an Eastern-Christian and a Western-Christian form of interpretation.
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> Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher of Western Christianity, decided to express the Christian idea of man in seven theses which may be summarized:
>
> 1. The Christian is a man who—in faith—becomes aware of the Triune God.
> 2. The Christian—in hope—waits for the final fulfillment of his nature in the Eternal Life.
> 3. The Christian—in the divine virtue of charity—inclines towards God and his fellowmen with an affirmation exceeding all natural power of love.
> 4. The Christian is prudent, that is, he does not permit the Yes and No of the will to disturb his view of reality; on the contrary, he makes the Yes or No of the will depend on the truth of actual things.
> 5. The Christian is just, that is, he is able to live in truth "with the other"; he is conscious of being a member with others in the Church, in the nation, and in every community.
> 6. The Christian is brave, that is, he is ready to suffer wounds, and, if need be, death for the sake of truth and the realization of justice.
> 7. The Christian is moderate, that is, he does not allow his will to have and his will to enjoy to destroy himself.
>
> These seven theses suggest that the ethics of classical theology, as an explanation of the idea of man, is essentially a doctrine of virtues. More exactly they interpret the Biblical description of the perfection of the Christian by means of the sevenfold image of the three theological and the four cardinal virtues. It is, I think, most important to reveal once more to the general consciousness of our time this grand fresco of the idea of man as originally expressed in classical theology, a fresco which has faded to some extent and —even worse—which has been painted over many a time. This idea of man is significant not merely as a matter of "historical" interest, as a matter of showing "how it actually was." This interpretation of the ultimate human ideal is one that continues to hold good and it is, I think, truly essential for us to see clearly and to accept this idea of man. . . .

ACCORDING to Helen Iswolsky, in the *Third Hour*, IV, (P. O. Box 6, Lenox Hill Station, New York 21, N. Y.):

> . . . because here once more the final goal is Christ the Word, Christian action differs from all other actions, even the most noble and heroic ones. Christian action too is loving and crucified; it is essentially a sacrifice, and a manifestation of charity. It cannot be achieved without Grace, and requires prayer and purification. . . .
>
> We may go further and say that Christian action, spiritual action, is not only linked to contemplation, and dependent on it, but that in a way it is *in itself* a form of contemplation. In other words, to be really efficient, to exercise a *"doing"* in the true sense of the word, the man of action must possess many, if not all of the virtues of the contemplative. For he, too, must be completely detached, completely obedient to God's will, even when straining his own will to its extreme limit. He too must go through "the dark night"; for, when all human means have been exhausted by him, all human counsel sought, all human wisdom tried, he will have to seek the final solution by himself, in solitude and anguish of the soul. He will have to work outside all logical forecasts, and without maps and blueprints, because no "planning" can foresee what the true creative spirit can realize. He will have doubtlessly to be forsaken and deprived of all outward help (when time is ripe), in order to let God act in his place. Then will he enter the supernatural sphere. And this is the very sphere of light in darkness and of darkness in light, described by the contemplatives. Saint John of the Cross, for instance, compared this supernatural sphere to "the cloud, where, according to Solomon, God has promised to dwell," and to "the obscure air wherein he was pleased to reveal his secrets to Job."
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> One could say that if Christian contemplation is *doing*, then also Christian action is *contemplation*. And therein lies that paradox of Martha and Mary, though no doubt we consider as paradoxical all that is difficult to grasp in Christian life, and even more difficult to attain. However, Solomon and Job saw *no* paradox in the fact that their life, their struggles, sufferings, their actions good or evil, were steeped in that dark air, wrapped in that cloud which so often figures in the scriptures. . . .

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CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Indonesian Catholics

THE religious map of Indonesia is almost as varied and confusing as the political, racial, and linguistic divisions are. Among a total population of about 72 millions, Indonesia numbers approximately 2,400,000 Christians (1,600,000 Protestants and 800,000 Catholics), 1,500,000 Hindus (mostly on Bali), and more than 1,000,000 Buddhists (mostly Chinese). All the other inhabitants of Indonesia, i. e., more than 67 millions, are either Moslems or pagans. It is impossible, however, to draw a clear line between the two groups because a very large number, possibly a majority, are people whose basic religious beliefs are pagan but who have accepted a small number of Moslem practices. In most parts of Indonesia, the registration of births and deaths, the celebration of marriages and the granting of divorces are under the authority of Mohammedan clergymen. Civil law and criminal law are based on the Koran. The calendar is based on the religious year of the Moslems. But in their every-day life, millions of Indonesians, though nominally Moslem, do not follow the laws of Islam but practice animist superstitions.

From the geographical point of view, Java and Sumatra are predominantly Moslem, Borneo is pagan, the people of Bali practice Hinduism, Protestantism is the strongest force in large parts of Celebes and on Amboina, Catholicism on Flores and the Kei Islands.

More than half of all the Catholics in Indonesia live on the island of Flores, where there are more than 400,000 Catholics among a total population of less than 900,000. On the other hand, there are only about 131,000 Catholics among a total population of 48 million people on Java. Of these 131,000, only about 40,000 are Indonesians while 85,000 are Europeans and the others Chinese and members of other minority groups. On Sumatra, there are about 30,000 Catholics among 10 million people, on Borneo 17,000 among 2,400,000, on Celebes 34,000 among 4,600,000. There are 70,000 Catholics among 300,000 people on Timor, and about 55,000 in the widespread area of the Vicariat Apostolic of New Guinea, with a total population of about one million. This Vicariat comprises the Kei Islands and the Tanimbar Islands, where a majority of the population is Catholic.

The Indonesian Catholics of Java, although they constitute only slightly more than one twentieth of the native Catholics of Indonesia, are of special importance for the future of the Church in the whole archipelago because of Java's dominant position as well as because of the leading role which some Javanese Catholics occupy in public life and education. Java occupies only one thirteenth of the area of Indonesia but holds more than two thirds of its population. With about 850 persons per square mile, it is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The people of Java (Javanese, Sudanese, and Madurese) are also the most gifted from an intellectual point of view and the most active in political matters. The only native Catholic Bishop in Indonesia, Most Rev. Albert Soegijapranata, S.J., Vicar Apostolic of Semarang, is a Javanese. Of a total of 64 native priests in Indonesia, 42 work on Java, 11 on Flores, 4 on Celebes, 3 on Borneo, 2 on the Kei Islands, 1 on Timor, and 1 in the missions of Bangka and Billiton.

The Catholic missions have been making the greatest progress on the islands of Flores and Timor. On Flores, the Catholic population grew from about 324,000 in 1942 to 390,000 in 1948, in spite of the Japanese occupation, in Timor (not counting the Portuguese part of the island) from 56,500 in 1942 to 69,000 in 1948. In addition, there are over 17,000 catechumens on Flores and over 10,000 on Timor.

The fact that Flores seems to be on the way to becoming a completely Catholic country is due to a number of favorable circumstances. One of these is the amazing fact that the Portuguese missions of the 16th century left a deep impression among the people although no Catholic missionary was allowed to enter for two hundred years (from 1606 to 1807). Another reason is the fact that Islam has never made more than superficial inroads among the Florinese. The principal reason, however, seems to be that, up to the time of the Japanese occupation, all schools on Flores were Catholic schools. The Japanese transformed these schools, which numbered about 200, into secular schools. In practice, however, the change did not make much difference because the teachers remained the same and all of them were Catholic. Since there were no other school books available, the Catholic textbooks continued to be used in the schools. Although most priests and sisters were deported by the Japanese, the Catholics of Flores showed their loyalty to the Church in many ways. At present, the people, even the non-Catholics, look to the native priests and teachers for leadership, even in political matters. When the Republic of Eastern Indonesia was founded at the Conference of Den Passar, Bali, December 18, 1946, with the intention of making it a constitutent part of the future United States of Indonesia, all three delegates from Flores were Catholics: a native priest, Father A. Conterius, who is Editor of the Catholic weekly newspaper, *Bentara,* and a native Catholic lay teacher, Louis Mantero, were elected as people's representatives while a Dutch missionary, Father P. Raats, S. V. D., was present as a delegate of 6 Catholic and 3 Mohammedan radjas (regional rulers). The same representatives are now sitting in the Legislature of Eastern Indonesia, which convenes at Makassar, Celebes. Timor also is represented in the parliament by a native priest, Father Gabriel Manek, S. V. D.

A Catholic political party, named "Partai Katolik Rajat Indonesia" (PKRI), has recently become very active in Flores, Timor, Celebes, and the Kei Islands. It has no direct relationship with the Catholic Indonesian Party on Java, "Partai Katolik Republik Indonesia" (also abbreviated PKRI), but some of its members have shown great admiration for the Javanese leaders, and have expressed the view that the leaders of the Republic of Indonesia should also hold leading positions in the United States of Indonesia.

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The Screen

Varied Program

Command Decision

AS A FILM "Command Decision" is not as forceful as it was on the stage; and this is not because scriptwriters William Laidlaw and George Froeschel have dropped the unladylike language used in William Wister Haines' original play. But the scriptwriters and more particularly Director Sam Wood seem to have overlooked the important fact that a movie must move. On the stage the actors can talk endlessly about action happening offstage; but in the movies, because the camera can go everywhere, we must see what happens. If one can disregard its static qualities and talkiness, "Command Decision" ranks among the best pictures about the last war. Its theme is that war is hell—for the officers who make the decisions that send men to their deaths as well as for the men.

The cast that Producer Sidney Franklin assembled to put over this message is excellent, especially Clark Gable as the general whose commands start Operation Stitch into action (a bombing operation that costs the lives of many fliers, but eventually saves many more lives as it shortens the war), Walter Pidgeon as his superior officer whose life is complicated by the arrival of a Congressional Committee just when Stitch gets going, Brian Donlevy as the general who replaces Gable and then learns why the man who makes command decisions must seemingly have a heart of stone and the wisdom of Solomon. Also in this good all-male cast are Charles Bickford, John Hodiak, Van Johnson, Edward Arnold and many others who add to the film's effectiveness—for the film is effective, not only in its big dramatic scenes (as when Gable in the control tower guides a wounded plane onto the field, or when Hodiak's death is announced just as the officers are softsoaping a congressman) but also as a whole. Any picture making you understand the wrongness of war as well as feel it deserves to be seen. "Command Decision" is such a picture.

Wake of the Red Witch

HERE's an item for audiences who like a lusty sea yarn that moves in lively cinema fashion regardless of how little sense it makes or whose sensibilities are offended. "Wake of the Red Witch," based on Garland Roark's novel and directed by Edward Ludwig with an emphasis on action and suspense, tells a story that is packed with fights, romance, South Sea adventure, underwater horror (man-versus-octopus; man-versus-sunken-gold) and a whole series of episodes dominated by man's baser motives. Most prominent in the cast are John Wayne and Luther Adler, portraying for want of better classification: hero and villain; but their virtues and vices get so mixed up that it's hard to tell whom we should hiss more vehemently. Surrounding these two tough seamen are Gail Russell, Gig Young, Eduard Franz, Adele Mara and various others who line up behind their opposing captains and get into the spirit of this lengthy tug-of-war. If you can stand the film's pretentiousness and brutality, you may find it amusing.

Chicken Every Sunday

AIMING to be little more than a folksy comedy, this movie almost succeeds in making us swallow a lot of sugar-coated pills about home and security and mother. If it weren't for the nice light direction of George Seaton and the affable performances of Celeste Holm and Dan Dailey, "Chicken Every Sunday" would be one big bromide. But, as an impractical husband who invests and reinvests, and as a practical wife who runs a boarding house while her man dreams, Dan and Celeste manage to hold our interest with their entertaining devices. It takes a heap of living to make a home and a lot of boarders to make Celeste decide finally that security isn't a house and furniture; it's two people loving each other.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

"Not to Us, O Lord . . ."

IT NEVER has been my good fortune to meet Dorothy Day in person. Almost I hope that I never do; it might be an uncomfortable experience to encounter one who practices the Gospel so much better than do I, one who even outshines me in my own field of preaching. But it is interesting to speculate as to what manner of woman she is. Interesting, and easy too, as one follows the unselfconscious revelation of herself in her book, *On Pilgrimage* (Catholic Worker Books. $1.00).

It is not her personal appearance that is the field for speculation. Although it is easy to imagine her with a careless and practical hair-do, a face that has warmth without benefit of cosmetics, and clothes whose mode and condition would depend upon what first came to her hand in the Catholic Worker old-clothes room.

But it is the soul of the woman that gazes, serene and level-eyed, out of her writings, the soul of a poet and an apostle fused into one. She is not the sort of poet who dwells in an ivory tower, but one who stands on the stoop (if there be one) of 115 Mott St., with a compassionate heart for the Christ who comes and goes in the least of these His brethren. Nor is she a poet who writes in rhymes and labored measures. She writes as she thinks, and she thinks in terms of Love; Love mingled with a bit of the divine impatience that was her Master's as He wept over Jerusalem.

In *On Pilgrimage* Dorothy Day gives new significance to journalese. She writes effortlessly, one might almost say without style, (in the commonly accepted meaning of that term.) When one speaks of style, such names as Newman and Montaigne come to mind, the charm of whose work depends quite as much on how they say it, as on what they say. The beauty of Dorothy Day's style, if one must use the term, is its unobstrusiveness; it carries the reader along without making him conscious of the efficiency of the vehicle.

If what I have said should seem to give the impression that *On Pilgrimage* is an "arty" book, let me give assur-

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ance that it is as down-to-earth as the diapers which Dorothy washed for her grandson Eric. She is a mystic, but not misty-eyed. She devotes several pages to showing that the marital embrace is the best possible illustration of the Beatific Vision, and marshals her authorities to discomfit the clerical Censor who had looked upon such a comparison "with horror." She is not above discussing the price of eggs and oleo, and has some telling remarks to make concerning the imaginary ailments of a certain type of woman.

On Pilgrimage is the perfect title for this journal, January through December, which Dorothy Day has written. It is not a rambling narrative, but there is time for discursions and asides. There is constant change of pace, now quietly reminiscent, now positive and didactic, now inspired almost to the point of passion. Especially does the tempo quicken when she speaks of Love or Poverty, or of Peter Maurin in whom she finds both Love and Poverty incarnate. All along the way there are artless little facets of expression which delight as they surprise. As when Dorothy says, "In a book by Hugh of St. Victor which I read once on the way from St. Paul to Chicago. . . . " Where she read the book has no bearing at all upon what she is saying, but the matter-of-fact localization gives sparkle to an otherwise undistinguished sentence.

Dorothy Day herself is a convert from Communism, long antedating the era of the Heywood Brouns and the Louis Budenz's. She has baptized Communism, and preaches voluntary poverty (having first embraced it herself) as one sure path to such happiness as this world can be expected to afford. She is the founder of the Catholic Worker movement, whose simple philosophy is that Christ is most unmistakably found in His poor and afflicted members. Under her, Hospitality Houses have been established in New York and Chicago and Detroit and I forget how many other cities; Hospitality Houses which offer shelter and food to all who come, without question or expectation. Such undertakings as retreat houses and rural homestead projects also have come within the orbit of her efforts, always designed to provide for the needy that which they need the most,—hope.

With Dorothy's Day's economic and political theories it is not my intention to quarrel. Her advocacy of absolute pacificism is at odds with the theologians, who teach that patriotism is a virtue, and that we must defend our Nation against unjust aggression even as a man must defend his family. Pacifism is a deceptively simple and an emotionally appealing answer to the problem of war, but conscientious objection as a matter of Christian policy is a theory which no moralist would undertake to defend. So much the worse for the moralists, Dorothy Day probably would say.

Not that she is a prideful woman. Her humility is not of the phony, hand-washing, please-walk-on-me type, but it is as real as the sores she has dressed and the bugs she has battled. Even her book itself appears in humble dress, —no bright board covers, no flashy dust-jacket, no publisher's blurbs. Just one hundred and seventy-five pages of an honest woman thinking out loud, between paper covers. If you read the book, as you should, you may frequently disagree with the author, but you'll not fall asleep over what she has to say. And disagree or no, you will love this valiant woman in whom the Spirit moves and breathes. She may not be posterity's darling, but it is not for that kind of specious immortality that she labors. Which, incidentally, explains the heading of this column, the first verse of the 113th Psalm: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy Name give glory."

LEO J. TRESE.

Back to Boston

OF THE MAKING of Boston books there is no end, but two recent volumes do not afflict the flesh and do complement each other admirably. As Robert N. Linscott—still another Bostonian who has followed tradition by going to New York—points out in the introduction to his *State of Mind: A Boston Reader* (Farrar, Strauss. $4.50), "from its beginnings Boston was a bookish town," and it is not surprising that a bookish town should have a literature of its own of ever-increasing proportions. Mr. Linscott's volume is an admirable anthology of that literature. David McCord, a New Yorker reared in Oregon who has become a Bostonian by adoption, in his delightful *About Boston* (Doubleday. $2.50) provides a bookish substitute for that "meditative saunter about the older parts of the town" which Mr. Linscott recommends as a preliminary to the imaginative act of putting oneself in the place of the people of the Bostonian past.

Despite the legend of conformity, given classic expression in our time in *The Late George Apley*, differences of opinion are traditional in Boston and are duly reflected in these two books. Mr. Linscott clearly inclines to the view which is an old orthodoxy among New Yorkers and a new

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heresy among younger Bostonians: that the Hub has long since creaked in premonition of the fate of the wonderful one-horse shay. He divides his selections from Boston books into three roughly chronological sections: "Bright Morning: 1630-1800," "High Noon: 1800-1865," and "The Long Afternoon: 1865-1948." On the other hand Mr. McCord's book is both an argument that present-day Boston is very much alive and itself a demonstration of that vitality. It grew out of a series of broadcast talks concerned with the "sight, sound, color, flavor, inflection, and atmospherics" of modern Boston, a city in which the past is continued into the present in a way unique in this country. Mr. McCord disowns both of the traditional alternative attitudes towards Boston—veneration and anathema—and scorning the "topside one-sidedness," walks down Beacon Hill, unlike Mr. Nathaniel Alden of *The Last Puritan,* on other errands than attendance at funerals. He denies that his book is a study in quiescence, and makes good his contention—although he admits to the use of rose-colored polaroid glasses made in Cambridge.

★

Mr. Linscott is an admirer of boldness and vitality. He finds them in the Boston of Puritan times, of Revolutionary days, of the golden age of world commerce, and of the great creative intellectual outburst of the mid-nineteenth century. But he concurs with van Wyck Brooks' diagnosis that after the Civil War boldness and vitality fled and the Boston world fell into a continuing decline which poisoned the creative mind. He makes his case with selections from Cotton Mather, John Josselyn, John Dunton, Judge Sewell, Hawthorne, Emerson, Garrison, Henry Adams, Henry James, Howells, and a host of perceptive though forgotten authors of the times, as well as such modern writers on Boston as Brooks, Samuel Eliot Morison, Santayana, Marquand, Flexner, Dos Passos, Weller, Amory, Holbrook, Beebe, and Lloyd Lewis. Each section is prefaced by a collection of provocative observations on Boston from eminent sources, by way of *hors d'oeuvre* before the meat. *State of Mind* is a wide-ranging anthology which leavens the familiar with the esoteric, and leaves the reader hungry for more. The editor's professed aim was to give pleasure, with information as a by-product, but the juxtapositions of his compilation are often stimulants to serious thought.

Mr. McCord is a sketcher in words, as well as in black and white and in watercolor—in other words an essayist, though he has cunningly evaded that appelation now in such low repute among publishers and editors. His little book is an artist's microcosm, in which an ingenious and pleasantly unpredictable mind examines Boston with the fresh eye of an outsider, while the adopted son draws cannily upon the wealth of Boston source material. His book should appeal to both the novice and the expert in Boston lore, and to anyone who has felt the charm of America's most charming city. In the end his sketches of different aspects of the city add up to something approximating that full-length portrait of Boston whose absence he deplores. After exploring Boston in his company one can only agree with him that "she is an old city constantly renewed" and that she is far from dead. Even if she were, Boston would still demand attention, for in his eloquent closing words "She is part of America, and the spiritual home of many who have never seen her rising from the sea, but whose fathers saw her as theirs before them."

MASON WADE.

More Books

The Grand Design. John Dos Passos. Houghton. $3.50.

IN THE PAST John Dos Passos achieved some standing as a vigorous, inventive prose writer whose main concern was the social and economic inequalities of his time. His latest book cannot be considered as either an example of vigorous writing or as a successful commentary on recent social and political conditions.

The Grand Design attempts an epical resuscitation of the New Deal years beginning with 1932 and ending with the invasion of Russia by Germany. There are many characters, all connected in some way with government work, and some easily discernible as reproductions of real persons. Walker Watson seems to be Wallace and Hopkins combined; Judge Oppenheim could be Byrnes or Frankfurter; Ed James looks like the columnist, Pearson. Along with Paul Graves, an agronomist, Millard Carroll, a business man turned bureaucrat, and Georgia Washburn, a research worker, Dos Passos introduces various pinks, Communists, rustics and chauvinists.

The story itself decribes the constant struggle for personal power on the part of the politicians, the fawning of the followers, the duplicity and evasion of those in power as they attempt to cut off an office-holder, and the frustration of the serious workers who are obstructed by red tape and ignorance.

The book is not successful because the characters fail to impress as real people, because the writing is for the most part a journalistic listing, and because the revelations are no longer revelations—merely repetitions of evils and deficiencies which have been exposed and lampooned repeatedly in factual and fictional writing. Further, the universal indictment of all the characters gives the story a depressing air of unreality.

Certain modern writers such as Silone and Koestler have shown that it is possible to integrate a criticism of political and economic injustices within a good, powerful work of fiction. In this novel Dos Passos does not show evidence of the insight and the talent necessary to accomplish this kind of book. The dialogue is extremely forced, the prose poems which head each chapter have a cheap radio-drama tone, and there is a definite lack of economy in the descriptions of action and motive. Finally, the continuous jeering gives this thing an embarrassing, immature truculence. *The Grand Design* has not much design, it seems rather to be the outcome of a strained contrivance.

GEORGE MILES.

China: The Land and the People. Gerald F. Winfield. Sloane. $5.00.

MANY BOOKS and numerous articles have been written about present conditions in China; but we are still ignorant about the basic facts. Statistics give the impression of a scientific approach; but the statistics about China are arbitrary and contradictory. Gerald F. Winfield tells us (based on the "National Reconstruction Journal") that 70% of the Chinese farms belong to owners and part owners, while only 30% are managed by tenants. While I was reading his book, the mail brought me, from Freiburg, Germany, the November 1948 issue of the Jesuit monthly *"Stimmen der Zeit,"* with an excellent article on Chinese land reform by Father August Tellkamp, S.V.D. This author tells us that only 45%

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of the Chinese farms are managed by their owners and 55% by tenants. Faced with such blatant contradictions it is hard to gain an objective picture of agricultural conditions in China.

Most progressive Americans are convinced that it was the chief mistake of the Nanking Government not to advance a vigorous land reform. They are certain that Chiang Kai-shek might be in a better moral situation now if he had dared to break up the exploitation of the rural workers by the landlords and to side with the tenants and the poor farmers. The most interesting feature of Winfield's book is his disdain of this popular belief. He is eager to debunk the clamor for Chinese land reform and opposes emphatically any further splitting up of the cultivated land.

Gerald F. Winfield, a research biologist, who worked and taught in China from 1932 to 1945, asserts that the productivity of the Chinese soil can be expanded only by modern technical methods and machines, by irrigation and sanitation, in short, by Western reforms. The fundamental cause of low production and the resulting low standard of living in China is, according to him, not the monopoly of the great landlords but the fact that the Chinese farms are so impractically small.

Only when Chinese farmers are able to cultivate larger, not smaller farms, rural standards of living can rise—according to Dr. Winfield. The land reform of the Communists which has such an irresistible appeal for the rural masses will—so he claims—destroy those farms which are large enough to make a go of things and will bring all farmers nearer to abject poverty.

The Chinese landlord will love Mr. Winfield's argumentation, while the ten million families who received land through the Communists will remain fond of these gifts and their donors. Is it permissible to treat the problem of land reform from the viewpoint of economic returns only? The Communists divide the land, not at all because they think that small farms are economically more rational than big ones, but because land reform is the most popular political goal in China—connected with the hope of Liberty, as it was in the French Revolution. China's poets and philosophers including Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Kuomintang, have always praised the small independent farmer as the most desirable type of existence and no economic calculations of Western experts will destroy this deep-rooted ideal.

Whether or not Dr. Winfield is right in claiming that the Kuomintang did more than the Communists for Chinese agriculture by securing the help of Western technical experts, the intervention of Europeans and Americans on behalf of Chinese productivity will never inspire the enthusiasm raised by the expropriation from the landlords in the name of the common man. It was by these measures rather than by military power that the Communists expanded their political influence.

Remember that the Russian Communists won the confidence of the mushiks by exactly these same methods. Thanks to the partition of big property the Russian peasants fought the battles for Lenin against Kornilov, Denikin, Kolchak, and Wrangel.

But a decade later, the Communists decided that large farms fitted better into their economic system. They shifted from freedom of the peasants to "collectivization," fixing anew the peasants as appurtenances upon the soil,

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Issue IV

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forcing them to slave on huge state farms or "bread factories." This may also be the final fate of the now "liberated" Chinese peasant, if the Communists are able to hold and expand their power.

MAX FISCHER.

New Irish Poets. Devin A. Garrity, ed. Devin-Adair. $3.50.

ALL BUT ONE of these 37 poets are new to American readers, in the sense that none of their work has appeared here in book form before. The one exception is Austin Clarke, and he is represented by poems not previously published in America. By no means all the poets are young; twenty of them are under 40, but only six are under 30, according to the biographical notes. Most of them earn their livelihood by something other than the practice of literature. Among them are a lighthouse keeper, a professor of Greek, a farmer, two doctors, two lawyers, a couple of civil servants, a concert pianist, and a director of a firm of printers.

It would be strange if so heterogeneous a group, some of whom have only the flimsiest right to call themselves Irish, possessed many characteristics in common. Still, there is a certain family resemblance among many of the poems. Death and the passage of time are even more prevalent themes than they would be, I believe, if the poets were of another nationality. The Irish landscape, too, with its inconstant moods, its mixture of grace and melancholy, is rarely out of sight for more than a few lines at a time. It should be stressed, however, that the archness and whimsicality too often associated with Irish poetry in the public mind are not to be found in this anthology. If you *want* pigs and Leprechauns, you will have to look elsewhere. The obsessive symbol of these poets as a whole, I would say, is the seagull. I'm not going to explore the significance of *that* right now, though.

Mr. Garrity is to be congratulated on an excellent job of editing. It would be difficult to think of any poet who has been unjustly excluded, with the possible exception of a man named Pearse Hutchinson, and I personally would quarrel with only two or three of the inclusions. I missed a few favorite poems, but found very many fine ones that were new to me. I had never appreciated Padraic Fallon, Valentin Iremonger, Francis Stuart or Blanaid Salkeld at their true worth before, while John Hewitt, Donagh MacDonagh, Patrick MacDonogh, and Bruce Williamson have more than justice done them. Others deserve mention for their own sakes, regardless of how they have fared in this anthology, but I think I have already cited enough names to make it clear that anyone who is at all interested in Irish poetry must have this book. It is illustrated with photographs of 33 of the poets and 12 woodcuts by Harry Kernoff.

VIVIAN MERCIER.

The Law of the Soviet State. Andrei Y. Vyshinsky. Macmillan. $15.

IN THE gentle art of pulling wool over the eyes there are few who can excel Comrade Vyshinsky, as all know who have followed the debates in the United Nations. For further demonstration of the art we have this immense tome of 750 large pages, in which Comrade Vyshinsky, in return for the privilege of paying a mere Fifteen Dollars for the book, offers us copious information

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concerning the blessings of the Soviet State, which, we are told, are the ultimate of all blessings in this best possible of all worlds. Needless to say, Comrade Vyshinsky has as much to tell us about the evils of bourgeois society and the capitalistic system as about the happy, oh so happy Utopia organized on the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, the unexampled trinity, whose apostle he is. With reckless abundance he strews his words, close to a half million of them, with which he evidently hopes to submerge all those not so ready with words, but readier with deeds and accomplishments. It would be futile to make head or tail of this avalanche of words, adroitly including stray facts and hosts of figures, wherewith to beguile those susceptible to such things. A single instance of the method, however, will suffice to give indication of the whole. Thus, says Comrade Vyshinsky, "work in the U.S.R.R. ceased to be an instrumentality for enslavement and became 'an instrumentality for emancipation, making it possible for each personality to develop in all directions and to manifest all its capacities both physical and spiritual.'" It would be interesting to know what Comrade Vyshinsky would say about the concentration labor camps harboring, according to the most modest estimates, anywhere between ten and fifteen million persons. It would be interesting to know how he would describe the lot of these unfortunates by a word other than "enslavement." It would also be interesting to know how he thinks they can develop their personalities "in all directions" and manifest capacities "both physical and spiritual." As for those outside the camps, what would geniuses like Prokofiev, Shostakovich, etc., and the physicists who were recently rapped over the knuckles for not bending physics to Soviet doctrines, say to Vyshinsky, were they but allowed to speak. And so Comrade Vyshinsky gives us words, words, words. . . .

JOHN COURNOS.

Great Saints. Walter Nigg. Regnery. $4.75.

ON several scores this is a remarkable book. It is remarkable, surely, that a Swiss Protestant should have seen so clearly that the result of the "gradual fading away of the world of the Saints . . . has been to make the Christian world the poorer" and that "the setting of the sun on the grandiose world of the Saints must be deemed to be a tragic fate which has no parallel in history." And it is remarkable, too, how in the light of such a view, this Zurich professor of church history has been able to redraw the saints as authentic heroes and how accurately he has gotten at the true source of their greatness.

Nine figures have been selected for study: the Italian Francis of Assisi, the French Joan of Arc, John Baptist Vianney and Therese of Lisieux, the Spanish Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, the Swiss Nicholas of Flüe and Francis de Sales, and the German Gerhard Tersteegen. With the exception of this latter, all are Catholic saints, and towards them all Prof. Nigg shows a manifest sympathy. He makes the essential point that true sanctity is a divine gift rather than the work of man, that it reveals itself in nearness to God through the practice of charity, and that it involves the reproduction by the saint of the pattern of Christ our Lord.

A great deal of work has gone into the making of this book of 286 pages. The author has the knack of setting down the stories of the single saints in compact form and then of making clear what is characteristic of the sanctity of each. And whole sections evidence a delicateness of perception which is rare enough amongst Catholics and quite unusual outside the Church. Thus, the treatment of

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by Rev. Francis L. Sampson

Against a background of blazing action, Father Sampson has written a book which is concerned far more with human values than it is with military strategy. It is written with tremendous respect and admiration for the American soldiers the author served as a Catholic priest. It is a sincere, frank, and unsentimental tribute to them—officers and men—and to the country that produced them. It is, perhaps above all, a moving account of what their religion meant to American youths at a time when they felt the need of its inspiration and consolation more than at any other moment of their lives. $2.50

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the prayer-life of Teresa of Avila and the explanation of her conviction that she belonged to the category of great sinners are peculiarly skilled. And there is a masterly handling of the relationship between Sts. Francis de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal done in a few penetrating paragraphs.

Had Prof. Nigg been a Catholic, no doubt he would have rephrased passages here and there and would have hesitated about including Tersteegen among the Christian saints, for there is, after all, something of a problem in this latter case about predicting sainthood of a man for whom both Baptism and the Eucharist were irrelevant to the Christian way of life. Yet even as it is, Catholic and non-Catholic alike have much to learn from these pages.

This present English version has been made competently by William Stirling. Nine photographs add to the text. But on the debit side are the smallness of the type employed (there are 47 lines to a page) and the tangled references bunched at the end of the volume. Surely the publishers would have been better advised to have given the book a format more in keeping with its worth.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

The Liturgical Year. Abbot Gueranger, OSB. Newman Book Club. $4.00.

THIS projected publication of all the fifteen volumes of Abbot Gueranger's great explicatory meditations on the Liturgy, is an admirable enterprise. They are splendidly translated by Dom Laurence Shepherd of the English Benedictine Congregation, and this English version is wonderfully well-timed. For America is growing daily into an ever-awakening consciousness of the splendors of the liturgy, and these volumes, which comprise all the loviest and least known proses, hymns, antiphons and prayers from all sources—from the Mozarabic ritual, from the Cluny Missal, from the Salisbury (or Sarum) primer, from the Paris breviaries, from the work of the three great Victorines, Adam, Richard and Hugh, are an unprecedented feast. So far one volume of Advent, and two covering the Christmas cycle, from Dec. 25th to Feb. 2nd, have appeared, and are most suitable and delightfully varied nourishment, for the heart and mind. These hierarchic sequences and prayers are, as the recent great Encyclical made fully clear, the best possible preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion. Through knowledge our love grows, and through these volumes our puny spiritual selves will stretch, until they fully share in the immensity of the universal Church, that ceases not, night nor day, to rejoice daily and annually, with the turning earth and the steadfast stars, with the blessed dead and the whole company of heaven. A. F.

The Decorative Arts of Sweden. By Iona Plath. Scribners. $10.

SMALL NATIONS seem to have better opportunities to develop their arts and crafts than large ones, with their tendencies to centralizing and large-scale industries, encouraging standardization. This immense, handsome volume, with 500 photographic illustrations, 32 in color, is ample testimony to the individual initiative in Sweden. It offers especial evidence of the high esteem in which the people of that country hold the home and everything pertaining to the home. There is infinite variety here, owing chiefly to the widely diverging geographical conditions. The book begins with a historical survey and proceeds to describe the textiles, ceramics, metal, glass and wood objects, and wall paintings. Rugs, spoons, chests, baskets, cupboards, bowls, jewelery, candlesticks, and what not, are all adequately represented in typical examples. J. C.

Paratrooper Padre. Francis L. Sampson. Catholic Univ. Press. $2.50.

WHEN Father Sampson went into the war as a chaplain, he went in all the way and joined the paratroops. After Benning, he went to England, jumped both in the Normandy invasion and in Holland, and later, during the defense of Bastogne, was captured by the Germans. After a stretch in German prison camps where he had his fill of grass soup, Father Sampson was liberated by Russian troops.

His book is made up largely from letters he wrote home to his family, and the writing is consequently close and personal, without the literary affectation which surrounds other consciously journalistic accounts of the war. Through his unaffected, honest words comes a very direct picture of a soldier-priest in the thick of it all.

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